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The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (CSM), Alfonso X's *mariale magnum*, with its rich store of troubadour poetry, music and iconography, has inspired relatively few doctoral theses and an even smaller body of monographs. The size of the CSM corpus and its structure, evolution, internal complexity and heterogeneity have long been a hurdle for aspirant researchers seeking a topic of manageable size. In this context, Drummond's monograph, drawing heavily on his 2017 doctoral thesis, offers an exciting prospect, promising an interdisciplinary approach to the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (CSM), with rhetoric, participant response and memory supplementing the musicological, hagiographical, art historical and text-critical approaches usually deployed.

The results are deeply disappointing. This new perspective on the messages conveyed by the CSM leads to conclusions that could not be more traditional—Alfonso uses the miraculous narratives of the CSM and their rich manuscripts to reinforce his waning political power and assert his privileged status as the confidant, favourite and champion of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Where the book claims originality is in the analysis of the textual, musical and social means deployed by Alfonso and his poets to promote this message: as songs the CSM use musico-textual devices of memorial marking of selected parts of the text, creating persuasive discourse which through its location in the ludic space of courtly ritual inexorably leads the audience to accept the political message intended by Alfonso. The author's method is to interleaf extended discussions of this heady conceptual framework with close readings of selected texts, in which the musico-textual devices are presented, not always convincingly, as the only or main source of poetic and political meaning.

The structure of the book is devised to further this overarching argument. After a Preface giving a modicum of contextual information on the CSM and Alfonso X, and outlining

the theoretical framework, six substantial chapters look at different components of analysis, illustrated by *cantigas* which are often thematically related, and an Epilogue restates the overall argument. Chapter 1, 'Songs of Persuasion', introduces some concepts of classical and medieval rhetoric, with a discussion of their reception in medieval Iberia. Drummond claims that 'medieval rhetoric functions as a tool to persuade the *Cantigas*' listeners': of particular relevance is 'the canon of *dispositio*—that which concerns the marshalling of arguments within the text'. The application of *dispositio*, however, reveals nothing new about the CSM: they have an opening passage with a number of functions, not least the linking of the refrain to the narrative, a narrative and a closing act of praise. We are told that rhetoric has a role in mediating the divide between linear narrative and cyclical poetic structure (20) but we have to wait until the following chapter for discussion of the structuring of narrative and of the didactic function of the refrain. Chapter 2, 'Sung Rhetoric', boldly claims that chapter 1 has 'established rhetoric's role in organizing the *Cantigas* 'texts', and proceeds to project other elements of rhetoric onto musico-textual structures of memorial marking. It is here that we find a schematic account of the *zajal/virelai* structure which is one of the main unifying elements of the whole corpus. Drummond claims that the internal structure of the *zajal* strophe and its associated *virelai* music determine the presentation of the text, with 'new' and narratively salient material placed at the end of the strophe, where the *vuelta*, with its 'sonic return' to the metre and music of the refrain, gives it prominence. Such a claim needs extensive textual study to justify it, which the selective analysis of parts of a few texts cannot provide. (To complicate matters, the author seems incapable of distinguishing between the *virelai* (AA BBBA AA) and the less frequently used Andalusian *rondeau* (AB BBAB AB) despite their very different repetition patterns). The idea that refrains interrupt narrative is explicitly introduced, extending into the questionable claim that interstrophic enjambment is a particularly violent type of disruption. There is a lengthy and ill-informed digression on the etymology of *refran*, and no recognition of the privileged role of enjambment in Hispanic courtly lyric. Chapter 3, 'The Place of Rhyme', discusses the aesthetics of rhyme at length, and only then adds a very incomplete account of CSM (and Galician-Portuguese) rhyming and strophic structure, to reinforce the importance of the final rhyme of the strophe, without scratching the surface of the rich range of stylistic effects associated with it. Chapter 4, 'Three Jewish Conversion Songs', applies the emergent framework to *cantigas* in which Jews or Jewish-facing names have significant roles (including CSM 22—musically an unrecognised Andalusian *rondeau*—where there are no Jewish participants). Chapter 5, 'Cantigas and Image Building', applies these ideas to miracles where Alfonso is protagonist, introducing the idea of courtly ritual and play as a means of propaganda, and Chapter 6, 'Crusades and Kingship', continues this in *cantigas* where Muslim-Christian conflict in Andalusia is the backdrop. The Epilogue restates the conclusions and the premisses, with a brief but uncritical consideration of the CSM as 'song'.

What this structure denies the reader is a systematic account of the CSM themselves—their manuscript tradition and the key issues of order and layout which distinguish them from other products of the Alfonsine scriptorium, their place in medieval Hispanic Literature and integration in the Medieval Galician–Portuguese Lyric, the basic musical and metrical practices which characterise them as a distinctive body of songs, and their place in medieval hagiography and the promotion of the Blessed Virgin Mary through collections of her miracles. Information on these aspects is drip-fed throughout the book, and is subordinated to the theoretical arguments being proposed; many of these descriptive sections are inaccurate and incomplete, particularly those relating to metrics and strophic structure, and features mentioned in a commentary on one poem may be ignored when inconvenient to the analysis of others. The author's grasp of basic CSM scholarship and of Galician–Portuguese as a literary medium is weak at best, and linguistic errors and mistranslations abound, particularly in the discussion of the secular lyrics where the author cannot rely on the published (if unreliable) translation used for the CSM. In a notable piece of theorised translation, a generic reference to *cobras e son*—‘verse and music’ (lit. ‘strophes and melody’) is glossed as ‘rhyme and music’ (41). The selection of texts for commentary is unrepresentative, with very few metrically complex poems included. The close readings of individual texts are partial, selective, and at times wrong-headed, which undermines the whole enterprise of creating a new method of reading.

All this might be pardonable if the focus of the book were in fact musicological in a traditional sense, but the musical analysis (in the fifty percent of poems for which a musical transcription is provided) is schematic at best. Musical transcriptions are purely melodic, and there is no discussion whatsoever of rhythmic interpretations of the notation (but no denial that the music is rhythmic in significant ways): quite how the author can exclude rhythm (verse rhythm, poetic rhythm, musical rhythm) from a discussion of how songs are a fusion of (accentual–syllabic) verse and (rhythmed) music is something of a mystery. There is no discussion of compositional processes, of adaptation and contrafaction (even in the discussion of *seguir*), or of the subtle ways in which melodies are adapted to poetic lines of different rhythm or length.

This book represents a lost opportunity for a genuinely interdisciplinary approach. The framework of ideas is interesting and stimulating, and provides useful avenues for reading medieval texts. In this case, however, they are imposed prematurely and opportunistically on a poorly understood *corpus*, to the exclusion of other approaches, and with the discussion driven by rhetoric rather than analysis. Instead of adding a new set of analytical tools for this complex body of texts, Drummond attempts to bypass established critical methods and distinctions and replace them with a subjective holistic framework. The failure of this analysis, combined with the deficiencies of the description of the key features of the CSM, makes this a difficult book to recommend.

Stephen Parkinson is currently an Honorary Research Fellow in Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford, having retired in 2015 from his post as Associate Professor of Portuguese Language and Linguistics. He began his career working on Portuguese Linguistics, and entered Cantigas de Santa Maria studies with a groundbreaking study of refrains, leading to a new critical edition of the texts, which is approaching completion. He founded the Centre for the Study of the Cantigas de Santa Maria in 2005, to launch the Oxford Cantigas de Santa Maria Database. He has published some 40 articles on the CSM, and edited the influential collection *Cobras e Son* (2000) and the *Companion to Portuguese Literature* (2009).